

Amendments to the claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently amended) A wire attachment assembly, comprising:
 - a collar including a center aperture dimensioned to receive a portion of a wire, a threaded portion, and a tapered internal recess;
 - a cylindrical member including a threaded end engaging the threaded portion of the collar; and
 - a tapered wedge-shaped unitary member disposed between the collar and cylindrical member, and
 - including a center aperture dimensioned to receive the portion of the wire and a groove or slot extending along the length of the wedge-shaped member such that when the cylindrical member and collar are screwed together the tapered internal recess of the collar compresses or crimps the tapered wedge-shaped member about the portion of the wire, to provide a tight fit between the wedge-shaped member and the wire, the tight fit remaining intact even upon loosening of the cylindrical member from the collar.
2. (Previously amended) The assembly of claim 1, wherein the collar further includes a shoulder having a hexagonally shaped outer surface allowing gripping with a tool.
3. (Previously amended) The assembly of claim 1, wherein the cylindrical member further includes a shoulder having a hexagonally shaped outer surface allowing gripping with a tool.
4. (Original) The assembly of claim 1, wherein the cylindrical member further includes a center recess dimensioned to receive a portion of the wire.

5. (Original) The assembly of claim 1, composed of at least one hard material selected from the group consisting of metals, plastics, and polymers.
6. (Original) The assembly of claim 1, further comprising means for attaching the cylindrical member to a surface.
7. (Canceled)
8. (Currently amended) The assembly of claim 1, wherein the inner surface of the wedge-shaped member includes means for increasing friction between the wedge-shaped member and the wire.
9. (Original) The assembly of claim 1, wherein the cylindrical member further includes an end for attachment through a support member.
10. (Currently amended) A wire attachment and tensioning device, comprising:
 - a rigid body having a threaded end;
 - means for attaching a portion of a wire to the rigid body in a fixed connection;
 - and
 - a tensioning assembly being an independent component from the attaching means and the rigid body, the tensioning assembly being fully rotatably attached to a support surface and the tensioning assembly including a threaded end to receive the threaded end of the rigid body such that rotating the tensioning assembly adjusts the distance of the portion of the wire attaching means from the support surface ~~without affecting~~ while maintaining the fixed connection between the rigid body and the wire unaffected by rotation of the tensioning assembly.
11. (Previously amended) The device of claim 10, wherein the tensioning assembly further comprises a feature allowing turning of the tensioning assembly with a tool.

12. (Original) The device of claim 11, wherein the feature comprises a hole disposed trans-axially through the tensioning assembly.
13. (Currently amended) The device of claim 11, wherein the feature comprises a shoulder having a hexagonally shaped outer surface disposed circumferentially about ~~the~~ a longitudinal axis of the tensioning assembly.
14. (Original) The device of claim 10, further comprising a means for locking the position of the tensioning assembly with respect to the wire attachment means.
15. (Original) The device of claim 10, wherein the tensioning assembly further comprises:
 - a cylindrical member including a feature allowing rotation of the member with a tool and a first threaded end and a second threaded end, the first end being the threaded end receiving the threaded end of the rigid body;
 - a threaded swivel engaging the cylindrical member;
 - a mounting plate including a center aperture through which the threaded swivel and cylindrical member are engaged, and an internal recess for rotatably receiving the threaded swivel; and
 - means for fastening the plate to the support surface.
16. (Original) The device of claim 15, wherein the threaded swivel includes a substantially hemispherical surface for engaging the internal recess of the mounting plate.
17. (Original) The device of claim 15, wherein the mounting plate further includes a cylindrical flange about the center aperture having a groove dimensioned to allow wire attachment to the support surface at an angle of up to 45 degrees from the axis of the center aperture.
18. (Original) The device of claim 15, wherein
 - the mounting plate further includes a plurality of holes; and

the means for fastening the mounting plate to the support surface comprises a plurality of fasteners disposed through the holes of the mounting plate into the support surface.

19. (Currently amended) The device of claim 10, wherein the tensioning assembly further comprises:

a cylindrical member including a feature allowing rotation of the cylindrical member with a tool, a threaded end receiving the threaded end of the rigid body, and a swiveled end;
a mounting plate including a center aperture through which the cylindrical member is disposed and an internal recess for rotatably receiving the swiveled end of the cylindrical member; and
means for fastening the plate to the support surface.

20. (Original) The device of claim 19, wherein the mounting plate further includes a cylindrical flange about the center aperture having a groove dimensioned to allow wire attachment to the support surface at an angle of up to 45 degrees from the axis of the center aperture.

21. (Original) The device of claim 19, wherein
the mounting plate further includes a plurality of holes; and
the means for fastening the mounting plate to the support surface comprises a plurality of fasteners disposed through the holes of the mounting plate into the support surface.

22. (Currently amended) The device of claim 10, wherein the tensioning assembly further comprises:

a cylindrical member including a feature allowing rotation of the cylindrical member with a tool and a first threaded end and a second threaded end, the

first end being the threaded end receiving the threaded end of the rigid body;

a rotatable threaded member protruding from the support surface engaging the second threaded end of the cylindrical member.

23. (Currently amended) The device of claim 10, wherein the wire attaching means further comprises:
- a collar including a center aperture dimensioned to receive the portion of the wire, a threaded portion, and a tapered internal recess; and
 - a tapered wedge-shaped unitary member disposed between the collar and the rigid body, and including a center aperture dimensioned to receive the portion of the wire and a groove or slot extending along the length of the wedge-shaped member;
- wherein the rigid body further includes a second threaded end engaging the threaded portion of the collar such that when the rigid body and collar are screwed together the tapered internal recess of the collar compresses or crimps the tapered wedge-shaped member about the portion of the wire, to provide a tight fit between the wedge-shaped member and the wire, the tight fit remaining intact even upon loosening of the cylindrical member from the collar.
24. (Currently amended) The assembly device of claim 23, wherein the collar further comprises a shoulder allowing gripping with a tool.
25. (Currently amended) The assembly device of claim 23, wherein the rigid body further includes a shoulder allowing gripping with a tool.
26. (Currently amended) The assembly device of claim 23, wherein the rigid body further includes a center recess dimensioned to receive an end of the portion of the wire.

27. (Currently amended) The ~~assembly~~ device of claim 23, composed of at least one hard material selected from the group consisting of metals, plastics, and polymers.
28. (Currently amended) The ~~assembly~~ device of claim 23, wherein the inner surface of the wedge has features for increasing friction between the wedge and the wire.
29. (Original) A railing system including at least one wire attachment assembly as per claim 1.
30. (Currently amended) The railing system of claim 29, wherein the at least one wire attachment assembly ~~connects~~ is capable of connecting a wire to a surface at an angle.
31. (Original) A railing system including at least one wire attachment and tensioning device as per claim 10.
32. (Currently amended) The railing system of claim 31, wherein the at least one wire attachment assembly ~~connects~~ is capable of connecting a wire to a surface at an angle.